

Convocation held at Cinnamon Grand Colombo on 15th March 2008

President's Message

Mr. Stanley Langer our Chief Guest, Dr David Ponnaiah Guest of Honour, Professor J N O Fernando Honorary Dean College of Chemical Sciences, Members of the Council, Members of the Academic Board, Invitees, Distinguished guests, Graduate Chemists, Diplomates, Students, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I welcome you all to this important occasion of the passing out of the 25th batch of Graduate Chemists of the College of Chemical Sciences of the Institute of Chemistry. Mr. Stanley Langer represents the Royal Society of Chemistry, UK. We thank you sir, for accepting our invitation to be our Chief Guest and to be here with us today. We are also very thankful to Dr. Ponnaiah from S. Thomas' College Mount Lavinia for your presence as Guest of Honour today and for the assistance that you have rendered to us in our education programme for many years. It is with great pleasure that I wish to say a few words at this memorable occasion.

The Institute has successfully conducted the Graduateship in Chemistry programme for a period of 25 years and continues to do so in contributing towards the national efforts on tertiary education in chemistry. It is the single largest provider of Graduate Chemists in Sri Lanka. The Advanced Diploma in chemistry offered after the successful completion of two years in the Graduateship Programme is recognized by the Northumbria University in Newcastle-on-the-Tyne, UK, as adequate to proceed to obtain a BSc honours degree in Applied Chemistry. Amongst other certificate courses and training seminars conducted by the Institute, the Diploma in Laboratory Technology is a regular course of study conducted by the Institute in order to develop the human resources needed for conducting laboratory analytical work and investigations.

The graduation day is a day in your life that you would preserve in your memory for the rest of your life. This year's graduation is special in celebrating the 25th batch of students as the Silver Jubilee batch passing out with a record output of 52 Graduate Chemists with seven first classes. I wish to thank every person who made it possible for this achievement of providing the Graduateship Programme in Chemistry at the Institute. I acknowledge with gratitude the untiring efforts of the Dean, Academic staff, Visiting Lecturers, Office Staff and others. I thank the parents who accepted the credibility of the Institute and placed confidence in the Institute's ability to guide and develop the professional capabilities of their sons and daughters.

You have done wonderfully well to complete successfully all examinations and assignments during the four years at the Institute. You have earned an exceptional qualification as a Graduate Chemist from

the Institute of Chemistry and that would pave the way for boundless applications. Chemistry as well known is a subject providing the basic knowledge to the sciences and chemical reactions occurring in nature such as in life sciences, environmental sciences, material sciences, science and technology in the development and quality management of industrial products and processes and such branches in a wide spectrum of applications. Therefore, the Graduates in Chemistry will have immense potential in applications and developing their career.

I quote from Andrienne Rich,

"The ability to think straight, some knowledge of the past, some vision of the future, some skill to do useful service, some urge to fit that service into the well-being of the community, these are the most vital things education must try to produce". Education has equipped you with such knowledge and skills.

I quote from Robert Schwartz, about entrepreneurship, **"The entrepreneur is essentially a visualizer. He can visualize something and when he visualizes it he sees exactly how to make it happen".**

Some of you may be having such qualities. I leave these thoughts with you.

I would like to brief you about the other professional development programmes of the Institute and about the forthcoming events.

Amongst the professional development programmes that are conducted by the Institute, this year we started the Herbal Technology Certificate Course and this programme attracted many professional chemists who are working in the natural products industry. This provided the insight knowledge of the subject and equipped them with skills to enable the participants to improve their products.

The forthcoming event 'Innovations in Food Science and Technology and Health-care for Social Well-being' is scheduled to coincide with the 37th Annual Sessions of the Institute on the theme 'Innovations in Chemical sciences for Social Well-being'. Eighteen world renowned expert scientists as resource persons will be sharing their knowledge and experiences with the participants and with twelve other research-paper presentations will create a platform for exchange of knowledge. This event will provide an opportunity for our scientists to establish linkages with the overseas scientific community in meeting future challenges in the application of chemical sciences. We welcome your active participation in the event.

Finally, I congratulate all the students who are leaving us as new graduates for what they have achieved and I extend my good wishes for their future endeavours.